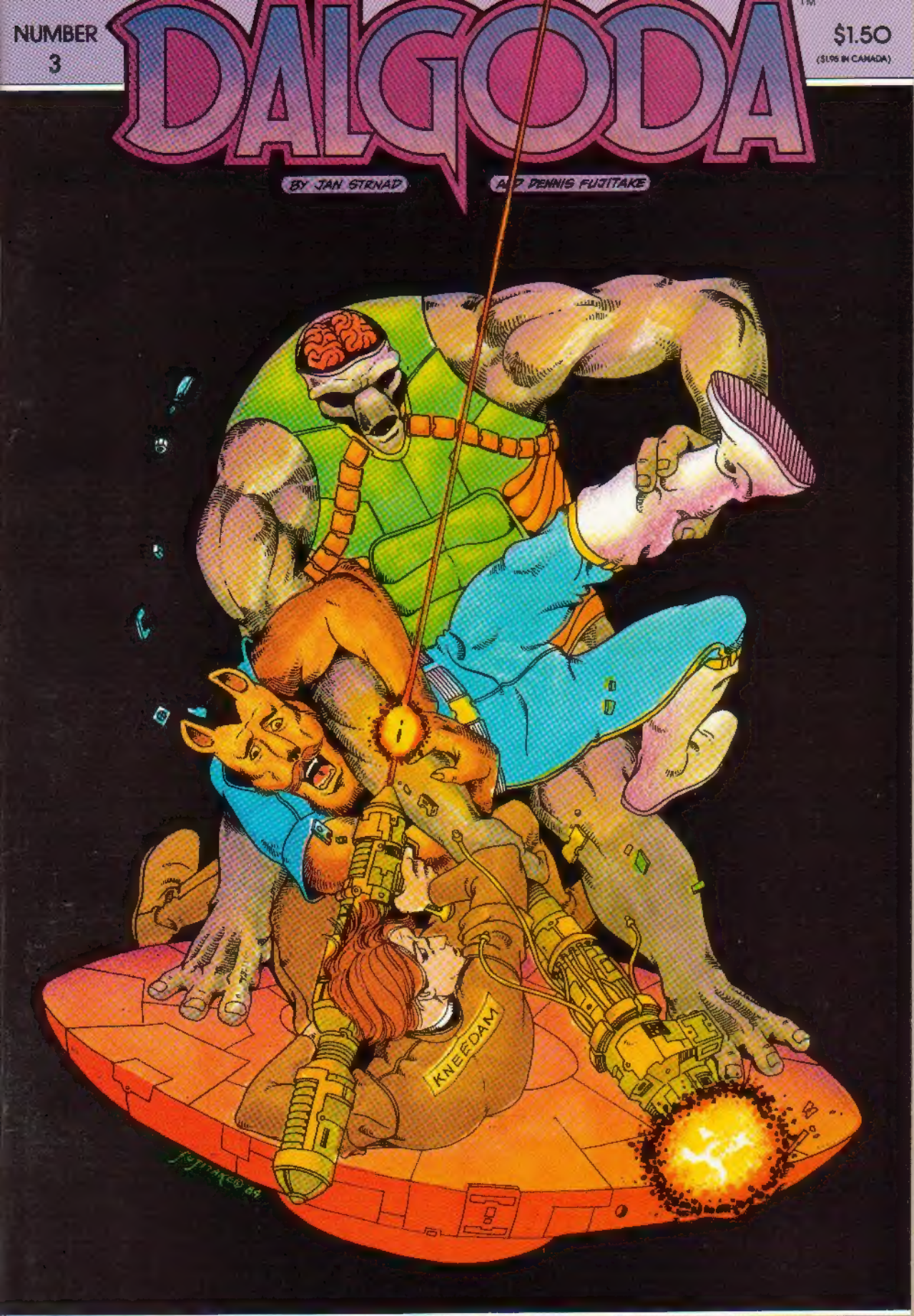
NUMBER 3

DALGODA

BY JAN STRNAD

ART DENNIS FUJITAKE

$1.50
($1.95 IN CANADA)



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS™

DALGODA™

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INTRODUCTION BY JAN STRNAD

Hello, and welcome to *Dalgoda* #3! This issue's contents speak for themselves, so I'd like to expound on an aspect of *Dalgoda* that's been giving us a lot of trouble: keeping *Dalgoda* on a strict publishing schedule, a goal we heartily endorse and which we've failed dismally to attain.

Waiting for your favorite comic book to reach the stands is like waiting for a girl in front of the theatre. At first you're excited, but when she doesn't show up when she's supposed to, you begin to get ticked off. And finally, if she's late enough, you lose all interest and don't care if she shows up at all.

Dalgoda has been chronically late (the hound!).

Actually, getting the book written and illustrated on time hasn't been a major problem. The problem has been getting it *printed*.

Dalgoda is a small-circulation comic book. In order to get it printed at any kind of reasonable price, we need to *gang-print* with other books, printing *Dalgoda* along with Kitchen Sink's *Spirit* and various titles from Pacific Comics. When Pacific went tummy-up, our printer was left with very few comic books to gang-print with *Dalgoda*. He was also left with a couple hundred thousand dollars of unpaid bills.

Immediately, two things happened: *Dalgoda* #3 hung around the printers for several weeks, waiting for enough comic books to come in to gang-print with, and the cost of printing the book more than doubled to make up for Pacific's deficit. Both situations were intolerable to Fantagraphics Books.

So...we changed printers. This issue is being printed by Ronald's, the people who do DC's deluxe books, Eclipse's line, Kitchen Sink's comics (they switched, too), and more. Finding books to gang-print with *Dalgoda* will be much easier and Ronald's is promising a quick turnaround time.

But the Year Of Looking Like Jerks isn't over. The issue you hold in your hands is so significantly late that our big Christmas issue—my favorite story to date, titled "Christmas Present"—is going to come out sometime in January.

Sheesh.

Meanwhile, Fantagraphics Books has moved to sunny California (right in the middle of the Dalgoda Crisis, of course), so take note of the new address when you write to tell us whatever you want to tell us.

Thank you for your patience.

Next Issue: A strange cover for a strange story: "Christmas Present." Hope to see you then!

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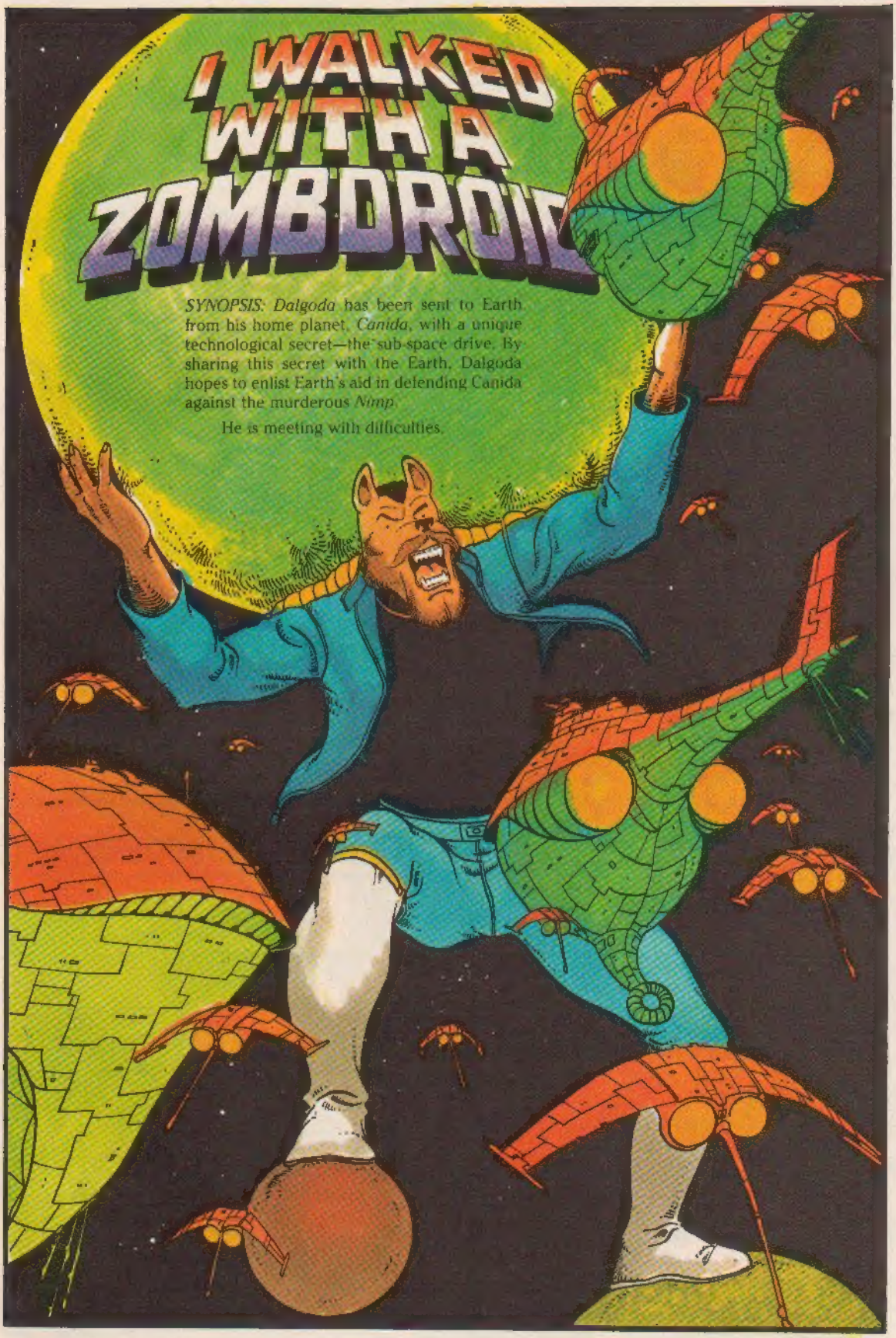
I WALKED WITH A ZOMBROID
SYNOPSIS: Dalgoda has been sent to Earth from his home planet, Canida, with a unique technological secret—the sub-space drive. By sharing this secret with the Earth, Dalgoda hopes to enlist Earth's aid in defending Canida against the murderous Nimp.
He is meeting with difficulties.

ALPF-1
SHUTTLE-A9E
A9E
VOODOO! I'm telling you, Kneedam, it's voodoo! This whole anthro-synthetics business gives me the willies!
You're reacting hysterically, Ravencraft. Bio-chemical engineering has operated in a strait-jacket for decades thanks to attitudes like yours!
From the first organ factories, clear through the android program, people have accused bio-chemical engineers of tampering with nature. Now it's the anthro-synthetics...!
Putting artificial organs in human beings is one thing...but reanimating dead brains and sticking them in android bodies...!
CAUTION:
...that's voodoo! No wonder everybody calls the damn things zombdroids! The name fits!
"Zombdroids" is an exploitive term cooked up by the tabloids in Low Tech areas to sell tawdry newspapers to stupid, Level One, Low Tech people! The anthro-synthetics...!
I don't care what you call them! A zombie by any other name is just as creepy! What do you think, Trione? They can't make us use these things, can they?
Believe me, Posey, I share your reservations about the anthro-synthetics. Unfortunately, the contract merely requires the World Security Council to provide "an efficient and effective crew for each sub-space vehicle"...
...It doesn't delimit such matters as humanality or volitional capacity. If the anthro-synthetics can be proven to be "efficient and effective"...
Hold it. What you'd be saying if you spoke English is that we're screwed...right? We're stuck with a crew of zombdroids.
LOCK 2
Well...yes, if the demonstration goes well. If the zombdroids can do the job, we have no basis for breach of contract. And remember...we're in a crisis situation...

. . . time is growing short and there's a shortage of qualified crewpersons. The law will recognize that fact and cut the World Security Council some slack.
Go away! Shoo! Scat!
Basic space training *alone* takes several years, and with Earth quickly becoming a repository for human detritus . . . say— where are these sticky *globules* coming from?
Dal! For chris-sakes, what are you *doing*?
It's leaking! I've never had one *do* this before!
Put your mouth over it!
Quit waving your arms! You're only making it *worse*!
Catch that thing!
I can't see! I can't see!
We're beginning docking procedures. Check on the passengers, would you? Make sure they're strapped in.
Aye, aye, Captain.
We're docking. Gravity will be back on in a minute. Seatbelts fastened, everybody?

Yes, we're fine. Thank you.
Here at ALPF-1, the first anthro-synthetics are already at work performing limited functions. If you'll follow me . . .
. . . we'll go down to the lab where the newest models are undergoing programming and testing in preparation for more complex duties. The latest generation is quite capable of—
Make way, mates! Patient coming through! Stand aside, there!
SNIF
SNIF
SNIF
Watch it, buster! You can be back in low-tech-city at a moment's notice. And *put out that cigarette!*
Please accept my apologies. Our subsistence-point funding too often forces us to recruit from the level One, Low Tech sectors.
These employees, of course, will be replaced with anthro-synthetics as soon as possible. In the meantime . . . well. I'm sorry for the annoyance.

First the brain is washed of all residual memory. Only the autonomic functions are left. The units have no memory of their past lives. . . no "personality" to speak of.

Then the volitional abilities are programmed in. . . adjusted, of course, for the difference between a biological physiology and a bio-chemical/mechanical one.

POWER

When this phase is completed, the unit is capable of independent movement and locomotion. However, it still lacks one important ingredient . . . *motivation*. It simply has no will. . . until we program it with a job function.

By the time a reanimated brain reaches our main lab, it's been thoroughly regenerated and certified. Months of labor go into preparing a brain for this stage of the operation.

Z-6

Here it's installed in a body, and basic programming begins.

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Voodoo...
Dead brains regenerated and brought back to life...artificial bodies...don't tell *me* we aren't playing—
WOOOF
THUD
You! It...can't be!
Well, well, well—Posey Ravencraft! Fancy meeting *you* here. I thought Zombdroid-ville was strictly for bio-chemical *maniacs* and Low Tech *scum* like *me*.
KNEEDAM
Victor Kneedam. They really are...(gasp)... scraping the bottom of the barrel.
Randy pulled some strings. So, how do I look? Almost as flashy as a *pilot's* uniform, isn't it?
It's still more than you deserve...

You were *drunk* when you crashed that freighter! I reported it and the tests backed me up! You should have been *shot*!
I was framed! I hadn't touched a drop! It was all a plot to get me grounded, and you were paid to testify against me!
You're just jealous because *I* passed the pilot's test and *you didn't*! Who paid you off, Ravencraft? Who gave you your chance for *revenge*?
Back off, you two! I'm sorry, Ravencraft—I should've warned you that Victor was working here. I'd just hoped you wouldn't run into each other. I know there's a grudge between you two, but...
Now, Rand—there's no need to lecture. I'm sure both Mr. Ravencraft and Mr. Kneedam are willing to suspend their ...ah...*personal squabbles*, what with the fate of two worlds hanging by a slender thread. Correct, gentlemen?
You're right, Trione. Considering the stakes, I'm willing...temporarily...to overlook the fact that Victor Kneedam is a murdering drunk and promise not to punch him in the face unless he punches me first, abuses me verbally, or I feel like it. That good enough for you?
And I promise not to provoke Mr. Ravencraft or any other lying, treacherous swine on this ship, and will abstain from slipping a knife between his ribs when he least expects it unless he attacks me first, goes to sleep with his door unlocked, or nobody's looking.
Good! Now let's confirm those fine sentiments with a hearty handshake and get on with the tour!
Victor, why don't you join us? I believe we're about to break for dinner...

You don't mind, do you, Miss Comley? I mean, if station regulations *prohibit* laborers from fraternizing with the technical staff...
I think I can convince that powers-that-be to relax protocol this time, Mr. Trione. Your friend is welcome.
Nee...Neeee...
It's voodoo—that's what it is, Dal.
Knee...dam!
POP
SPSC
POK
DRUNK!
SNAP
My compliments to the chef! Real food...and wine! It's an unexpected pleasure!
Wine, "sir"?
SOY STEAK
SOY STEAK
SOY STEAK
SOY STEAK
SOY STEAK
VEGE-CHICK
VEGE-CHICK
VEGE-CHICK

Why, certainly! I don't mind if I d—

Ouch!

Uhm . . . no. No thank you. I'm on duty.

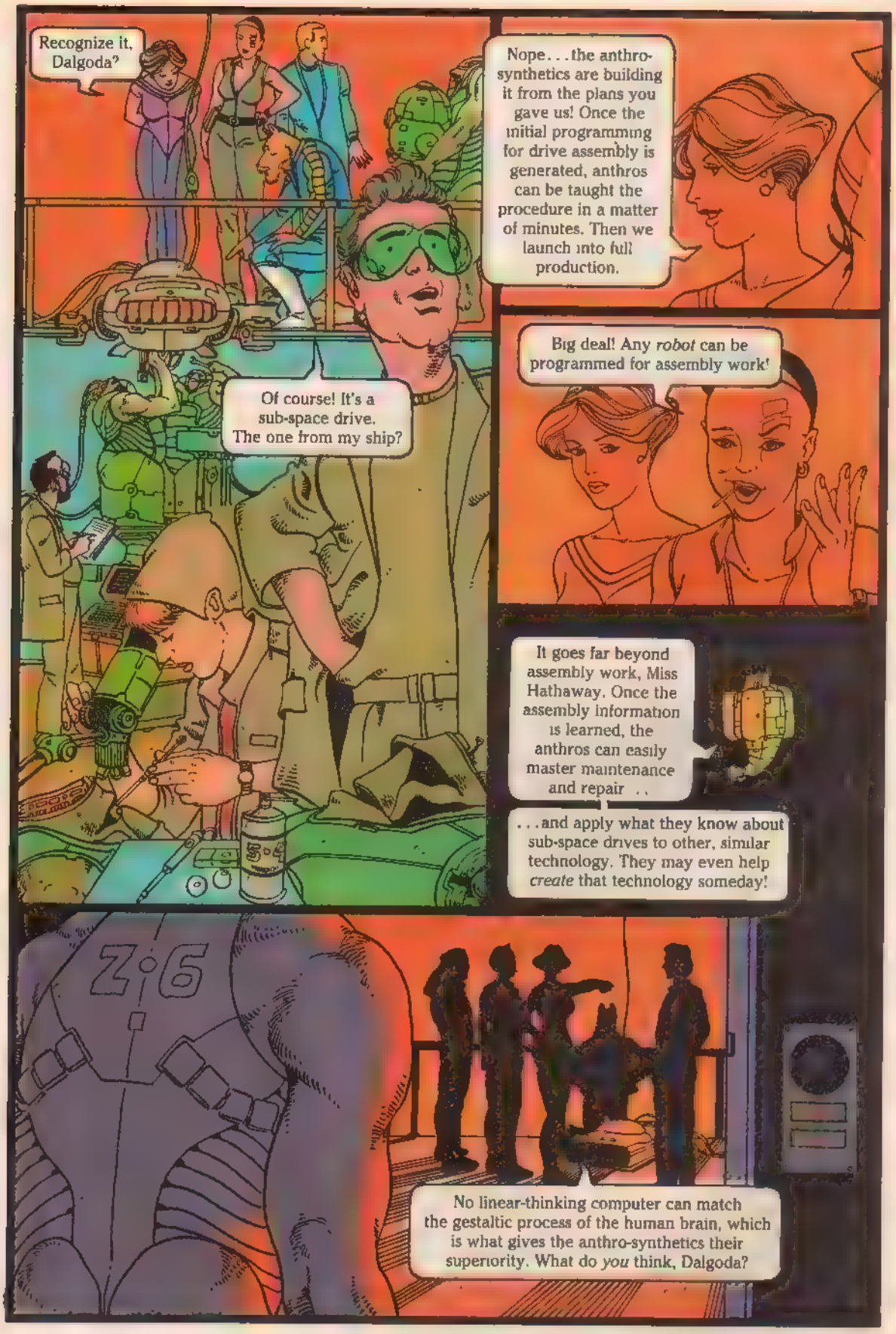
These strings are delicious—you must send the recipe to Canida! Do you eat this well *all* the time, Victor?

Never! We *peons* get the artificial, ultra-processed gunk. The *real* food's saved for officers and dignitaries.

Training and experience do have their privileges, Mr. Kneedam.

When we're through here, Dalgoda, I have something special to show you. I think you'll be very impressed.

Lucky you. One can always hope for the best, eh?


Recognize it, Dalgoda?
Of course! It's a sub-space drive. The one from my ship?
Nope... the anthro-synthetics are building it from the plans you gave us! Once the initial programming for drive assembly is generated, anthros can be taught the procedure in a matter of minutes. Then we launch into full production.
Big deal! Any *robot* can be programmed for assembly work!
It goes far beyond assembly work, Miss Hathaway. Once the assembly information is learned, the anthros can easily master maintenance and repair . .
. . . and apply what they know about sub-space drives to other, similar technology. They may even help *create* that technology someday!
Z-6
No linear-thinking computer can match the gestaltic process of the human brain, which is what gives the anthro-synthetics their superiority. What do *you* think, Dalgoda?

These sub-space drives are full of quirks Each one s a little different . our understanding of the physics involved is by no means complete. We've had no luck at all mass-manufacturing them
Some little thing goes wrong and. poof! There goes the drive *and* the person who learned the lesson If your zombd—, um, *anthro-synthetics* could be computer linked
I get it! *All* would learn from the experience of *any*! Good thinking, Dalgoda. I'll suggest it to our design engineers
You see, Miss Hathaway, another advantage of the anthro-synthetics comes to light! We can use them to preserve life and knowledge both!
I think it's spooky, bringing dead brains back to life I wouldn't trust one of those things to fix my *razor*.
They *are* rather unsettling to the instincts, Miss Comely. Their smell is so . . . antiseptic . . . I get no olfactory clues at all as to their intentions.
That 'droid *behind* you, for instance, looks positively *menacing*!

Gaah!
Dear Lord!
KRUNC
GGRRRRR
ROOARR
WHOOF
WHUP

SEC
POWER
KNEE DAM
Oh no... not *me*! Please... not *me*!
The thing's gone *crazy*! Are you all right?
I'm okay, but the zombdroid's drawn a bead on Victor! I have to *do* something!
STACK 0542
Don't, Dal! There's nothing you can do! Victor's *doomed*!
Got to *try*, Posey
Ugh!
WUD
UNGH!
OOFF!
OUCH!
THUMP
BUMP
CHOMP!
Uh-oh

Hey, the dog-man's a good egg! Ah *that's* what I need!
LAZ-R-DRI
KNEEDAM
BZZZZZZ
EEYOWRRR
Run, Dal! This way!
KZZZZZZZZ
Follow me! With any luck we can lose him in the corridors!
Down here! This airlock's got the strongest door in the place!

KPEEUNCH
Hurry . . get in! This'll stop it—if *anything* will!
KREEDAM
LOCK 52.00
I want you to know, Victor . . . I really appreciate your standing beside me in all this! You're a brave man!
That's funny. I was just going to say the same thing to you!
Z-6
Ever since I landed on Earth, *something*'s been after me. The kill-drone . . the mobilis strangulatum . . . and now this . . . *zombdroid*! I just seem to *attract* these things!
Yeah, well, your paranoia's working overtime. Didn't you see how it zeroed in on *me* back there? Nope . . it wants *me* for some reason, not you! *I'm* the boy it's after!
KREEK
WREENK
Dear Gods . . what have I done?
No . . *no*! It can't be happening *again*! Not *now* of all times!

EUNCH
Gig's up, Dal. The thing's smarter than it looks!
Over the top!
There it goes! It's after Dal and Victor! Get some *ordnance* up here!
I can't go on, Dal... can't run any more. I. I'm *dizzy* .

I'm sick. I can't walk. I wanna . . . wanna puke. I'm gonna puke. Where are we?
10-T
We're back in the assembly room. Hang on. I have an idea.
Stupid research stashun! Think they never heard of civ . . . (belch) civil prepard-ded-ness . . . Where's a guns f'r chris'sakes?
Take it easy, Victor. I'm going to get us out of this!
Knee-dam! Knee-dam!
Don't lose it yet, Victor! Hang on!
Knee-dam!
Kneedam . . drunk!
DRUNK!

KLICK
Too much!
Victor!
Da!
He activated the sub-space drive! But where'd they *go*?
Anywhere, Gunner They could have gone *anywhere*!
Or nowhere

POP
Z6
SPLOOSH
SPASH
DOOSH
AHHHHOOOOEEEEEE!!

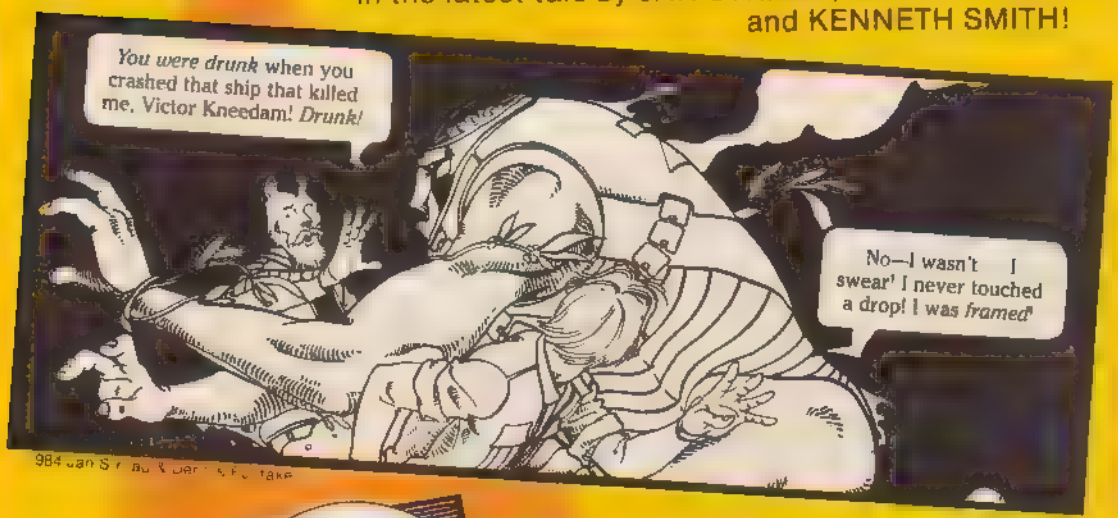
GASP!
I was hoping we'd be out of range... that only the *zombdroid* would be caught in the field! Please, Gods...don't let us come this far just to *drown*!
Well, what are you looking at? Help us!
Victor's out like a light...drunk! But when did he get the *chance*? We were with him every minute!
Zzzzz

Here he comes. What'd you find out, Posey?
Were they able to trace the brain? Whose was it?
It's like we figured—the brain came from one of the victims of Victor's crash. Apparently their whiz-bang *memory wipe* isn't as complete as they *thought*.
It must have recognized Victor in the lab—may even have overheard me accusing him of being drunk on the day of the crash. It wanted revenge on the man who killed it!
Poor Dalgoda—caught in the middle. And now he's warped out to some random coordinate. No telling where he's gone. Deep space, probably.
The vast emptiness between galaxies! The vacuum . . . the freezing cold! Or deep in the heart of some sun, incinerated instantly!
Into the bowels of some great, alien machine, maybe . . . ground to dust under mammoth gears.
Wherever he went, he died a hero's death. Better than what's waiting for me. I just hope . . . it wasn't painful.

(Giggle!)
Ha, ha, ha, ha!
(Giggle!)
Go ahead—throw it higher! I'll *still* catch it!
ZZZZZ
Poor Victor—he's slept through the whole welcoming ceremony! Phew! I can smell the alcohol from here! Oh well . . it's his loss
Those fish were good! Is the big red thing with the claws ready yet?
FND

NEXT ISSUE

Dalgoda and Victor Kneedam are trapped in a tropical paradise—but is it really all it seems to be? And is the menace of the vengeful Zombdroid really over? Meanwhile, Posey Ravencraft, down and out in Honolulu, considers the ultimate solution to his problems . . . all in the latest tale by JAN STRNAD, DENNIS FUJITAKE, and KENNETH SMITH!


You were drunk when you crashed that ship that killed me, Victor Kneedam! Drunk!
No—I wasn't I swear! I never touched a drop! I was framed!

And in "Grimwood's Daughter," the elves enter into final battle with the humans—but what role will Brii play in all this? By JAN STRNAD, KEVIN NOWLAN, and KENNETH SMITH!

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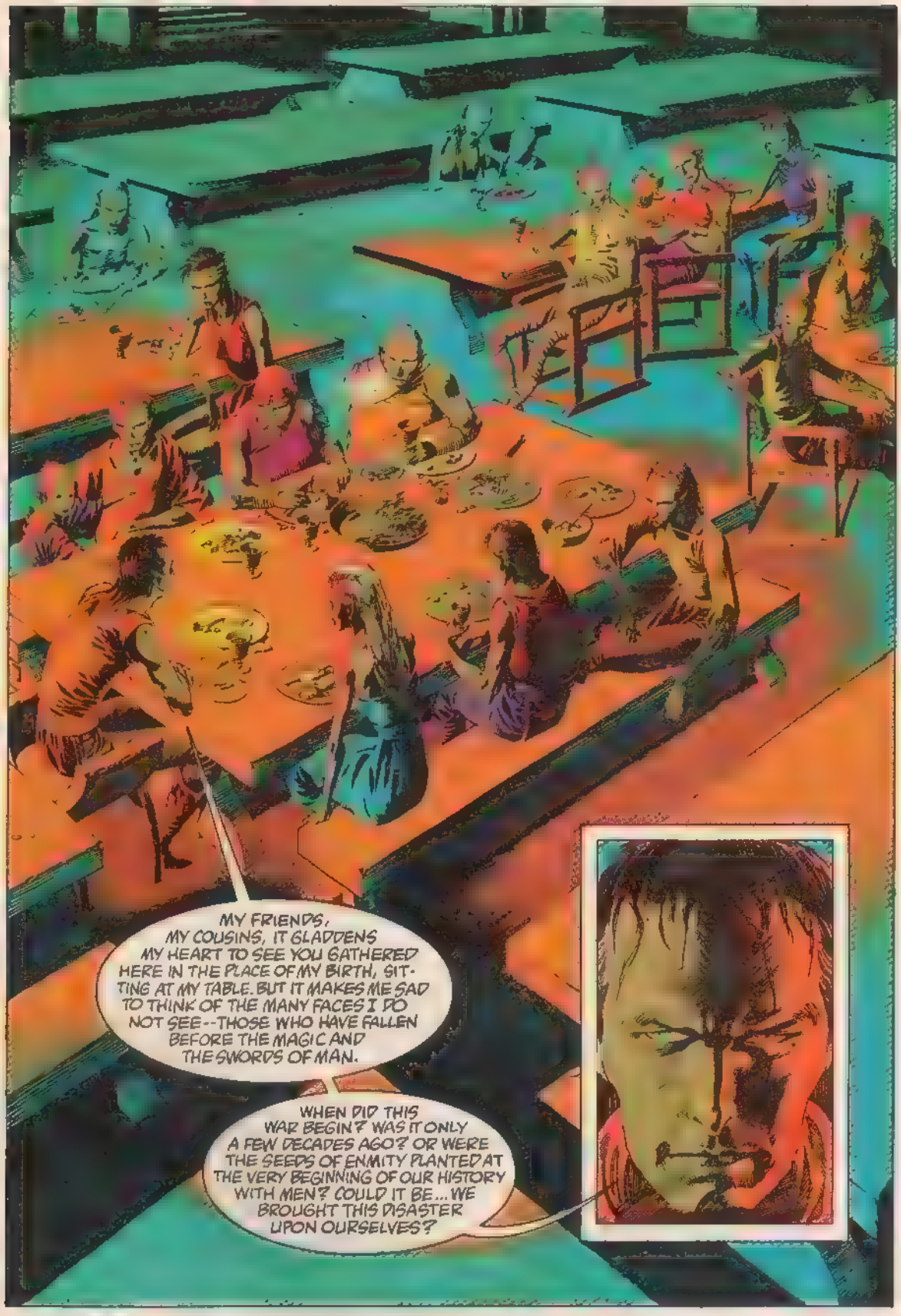
GRIMWOOD'S DAUGHTER

CHAPTER TWO

THE STORY THUS FAR--THE ARMIES OF MAN HAVE ALL BUT DESTROYED THE ELFIN CLANS. TIROL, LEADER OF THE GRIMWOOD CLAN, HAS SUMMONED THE SURVIVORS TO HIS ANCESTRAL HOME GRIMWOOD CASTLE, TO FORGE A FINAL STRATEGY.
BEFORE THEM... THE ARMIES OF MAN. TO THEIR BACKS... GRIMWOOD FOREST. WHERE THE WARNING IS POSTED:
BEND NO BOUGH, BREAK NOT A LEAF, HARM NO LIVING THING--FOR THESE ARE THE WARDS OF THE SPIRITS OF GRIMWOOD, SPIRITS WITH NO HEARTS IN WHICH TO HARBOR LOVE FOR ELVES.

STORY JAN STRNAD • ART KEVIN NOWLAN • COLORING: KENNETH SMITH • LETTERING: PHIL FELIX


THAT EVENING AS FEASTING GIVES WAY TO SPEECHMAKING, TIROL'S VOICE TAKES ON A MELANCHOLY TONE.
MY FRIENDS, MY COUSINS, IT GLADDENS MY HEART TO SEE YOU GATHERED HERE IN THE PLACE OF MY BIRTH, SITTING AT MY TABLE. BUT IT MAKES ME SAD TO THINK OF THE MANY FACES I DO NOT SEE--THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN BEFORE THE MAGIC AND THE SWORDS OF MAN.
WHEN DID THIS WAR BEGIN? WAS IT ONLY A FEW DECADES AGO? OR WERE THE SEEDS OF ENMITY PLANTED AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF OUR HISTORY WITH MEN? COULD IT BE... WE BROUGHT THIS DISASTER UPON OURSELVES?

"MEN WERE BLIND TO OUR PRESENCE, IGNORANT BEYOND BELIEF."
"HOW COULD WE MUSTER THE LEAST RESPECT FOR THESE AWKWARD SCRABBLERS-IN-THE-DIRT?"
"WE TORMENTED MAN WITH FOOLISH TRICKS. WE MADE HIM SUPERSTITIOUS AND FEARFUL. WE TOYED WITH HIS PRIDE."
BUT WE WERE NOT CONTENT TO END IT THERE.
CONFIDENT IN OUR SUPERIORITY, WE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO BECOME CRUEL.
"WE STOLE THE ESSENCE FROM HIS MILK AND CHEESE AND LEFT ONLY THE APPEARANCES BEHIND.. AND THE MORE HE ATE. THE MORE HE STARVED."
"WE BEWITCHED HIS ANIMALS."
"WE BLIGHTED HIS CROPS."

AND UNFORGIVABLY WE STOLE HIS CHILDREN, LEAVING IN THEIR CRIBS THE OFFSPRING OF TROLLS AND GOBLINS. THIS...THIS IS THE CRIME THAT HAS KILLED US.
FOR THE CHANGELINGS GAVE BIRTH TO THE MAGICIANS, AND THE MAGICIANS ARE MEN!
FROM THEM, MAN HAS GAINED THE ELF-SIGHT, SO WE WERE INVISIBLE TO HIM NO LONGER.
HE COERCED THE UNTOUCHABLE IRON FROM ROCK AND FORGED IT INTO THE DEMON STEEL. HE PROCREATED LIKE MICE AND SOON OUTNUMBERED US HUNDREDS-TO-ONE. AND THEN HE DECLARED WAR.
"LED BY NOL THE MAGICIAN, BREEDER OF DRAGONS, THE FORCES OF MAN UNITED AGAINST US. THEY DESTROYED THE ELFIN CLANS ONE BY ONE, UNTIL ONLY THOSE GATHERED HERE SURVIVE. AND WE ARE FEW, MY FRIENDS AND COUSINS. WE ARE VERY, VERY FEW."

WE HAVE COME TOGETHER TOO LATE. MAN'S MAGIC IS AS POWERFUL AS OURS. HIS WEAPONS ARE BETTER HIS ARMY STRONGER. FOR EACH ONE WE KILL, THERE ARE TWO MORE A FOOTSTEP AWAY.
WE CANNOT WIN. WE CAN ONLY RETREAT.
NO! NO! I'LL NOT TOLERATE TALK OF RETREAT!
THE ODDS SAY WE CANNOT WIN. BUT WHAT ARE ODDS TO US?
WE'RE ELVES AND THAT MEANS WE'RE FIGHTERS!
WE'RE THE BEST OF EVERY CLAN! WE'RE UNITED AND WE ARE STRONG, AND THE GODS ARE WITH US!
YOU, GRUMMULD.. YOU'RE A FIGHTER!
AND YOU TOO, LINGT, WHOM EVEN A GRAVE WOUND COULD NOT KEEP FROM THIS EVENING'S COUNCIL! I KNOW YOU'D RATHER DIE THAN FLEE!
ARE THE REST OF YOU LESS BOLD THAN THE SPRIGGANS ?
DO YOU RUN LIKE COWARDLY RABBITS IN THE FACE OF DANGER?
OR ARE YOU ELVES?
WE WERE BORN TO FIGHT! WE REJOICE IN BATTLE! WE GLORY IN DEATH!
SAME OLD LON.

FOR HOURS THE ARGUMENT RAGES. CALM REASON AGAINST HEATED EMOTION. TIROL PLEADS HIS CASE ELOQUENTLY; LON MATCHES HIM POINT FOR POINT. THE ALE FLOWS AND PASSIONS RUN HIGH.

THE ELVES HAVE FOUND UNITY, BUT ONLY IN WAR. TIROL EXCUSES HIMSELF AND ABANDONS THE HALL, AND LON, IN SPITE OF HIS VICTORY, IS UNEASY.

YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING, COUSIN.

SOME PLAN HAS BEEN BREWING IN THAT DARK HEAD OF YOURS AND IT HAS DIED A-BORNING... OR HAS IT? YOU BEAR WATCHING, MY FRIEND.

LON FOLLOWS HIS COUSIN SILENTLY DOWN THE HALLS OF GRIMWOOD, PAST THE WARNING SIGNS AND INTO THE FORBIDDEN CORRIDORS CLAIMED BY THE FOREST.

TIROL WALKS QUICKLY, EVEN THROUGH THE DARKEST PASSAGES--HE HAS MADE THIS TREK MANY TIMES.

AT FIRST IT SEEMS THAT TIROL HAS SIMPLY VANISHED, AND THEN LON SPIES THE OPEN DOORWAY CLOAKED IN VINES, A PORTAL THAT CAN LEAD NOWHERE--BUT TO GRIMWOOD FOREST!

THE STAG IS SO MASSIVE AND POWERFUL, BUT SO UTTERLY SILENT, IT MUST BE AN APPARITION!

BUT HOW DID HIS COUSIN LEARN TO RIDE A GHOST?

SO LIGHTLY DOES THE STAG RUN THAT NO TWIG IS BROKEN.

DOES LON DARE TO FOLLOW? HE RESOLVES TO DO SO, FOR IF THERE IS ONE THING HE CANNOT ABIDE, IT'S A MYSTERY.

FOR EVERY FORWARD STEP HE TAKES HE MUST TAKE SIX TO THE SIDE TO AVOID BREAKING A LIVING PLANT.

THE STAG IS SOON GONE FROM SIGHT...

...AND EVEN AN ELF'S STEP MUST EVENTUALLY FALTER.

THE FOREST SHRIEKS, AND LON IS CERTAIN OF HIS IMPENDING DEATH.

HORRIBLE SECONDS PASS, AND THEN ...

YOU! POOR, DAMNED FOOL.

YOU CHALLENGE YOUR FRIENDS TO BATTLE, YOU WAGE WARS YOU CANNOT WIN, YOU RUN IN WHERE EVEN A TROLL WOULD FEAR TO GO...
I WASN'T RUNNING. I WAS BEING VERY CAREFUL.
YOU'RE JUST LUCKY I WAS SO NEAR. I CAN TAKE YOU TO BRII, AND SHE'LL DECIDE WHAT'S TO BE DONE WITH YOU.
BRII? WHO'S THAT?
BRII IS A SPIRIT, AN ELEMENTAL. SHE'S THE GUARDIAN OF GRIMWOOD FOREST, BORN OF THE FOREST ITSELF, PLEDGED TO PROTECT IT AND ALL THE LIFE IT HARBOURS.
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, COUSIN -- WHAT IS SHE TO YOU?
BRII'S MY LOVER.
To Be Continued...

LETTERS

SEND TO: DALGODA, 707 Camino Manzanas, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

We're devoting our text page this issue entirely to letters, so without further ado, let's get into what you think of Dal.

—Gary Groth

More Human Than "Real" Humans

Dear Fantagraphics Books,

I am usually a very fussy reader when it comes to comics, but I was absolutely delighted with *Dalgoda*. It is fast-moving, light-hearted, and original. It made my day! I believe that the *Telegraph Wire* reviewer was way out of line, and upon reading *Dalgoda* I find that all his criticisms were completely unfounded. I particularly enjoyed the fact that there was no phony heroics. When confronted with the Z-28 Dal did the only sensible thing: He ran like hell! This dog behaves more like a man than 95 per cent of the "real" humans that populate comicland.

Lee M. Hester
Palo Alto, CA

Will Miracles Never Cease?

Never did I imagine I would one day write a letter of comment to the infamous Gary Groth. More incredible still, this LoC is a complimentary one! Will miracles never cease?

Dalgoda #1 was great. I enjoyed it very much indeed and I look forward to future issues. I wasn't expecting to like it. I've never been fond of humanoid animals no matter where they pop up. However, Jan Strnad, whose *Sword of the Atom* series for DC I enjoyed, made the story "Factions" so gripping, with characters so believable, and a scenario so intriguing, I couldn't find fault with anything.

I like a dash of humor in my comics reading, something few writers pull off well. (Either the humor is slapstick or just not funny at all.) Mark Evanier, Dan Mishkin, and Gary Cohn are the only names I can think of, off the top of my head, who succeed in leavening "straight" adventure stories with humor. Now I can add Jan Strnad to the list. Certain scenes, like the secret servicemen in the diner's restroom and Posey's de-bugging of his apartment, were enough to make me grin —out loud.

Speaking of Posey Ravencraft, I suspect there is a lot more to this guy than Jan lets on. The little we learn in "Factions," however, is enough to make me like the guy. Dalgoda obviously does, which leads me to the star of the book, another extremely likeable figure. Dalgoda seems to be a completely guileless character. But again, I wouldn't be at all surprised to have Jan prove me wrong as the series develops. I also look forward to developments regarding the relationship between the Canidan and human races. (Are there still dogs on Earth? What will Dalgoda make

of them?)

The artwork of Dennis Fujitake is everything you and Jan said it would be. I remember Dennis's work in several issues of *The Comics Journal*, but the man has improved a thousandfold since then. He combines realistic figures (at least in terms of proportion and pose) with impressive machinery and hardware. The large panel on page 3 was particularly striking. His facial expressions are also very good. He presents emotions with a minimum of linework, which is really remarkable. In places, the art reminds me of Herge's *Tintin*. The coloring was, for the most part, equally effective. Only in a few places did the colors seem "wrong," somehow. Page 23, for example, seemed altogether too dark. Was this intended?

Suffice to say, I will be looking out for issue 2. I don't think *Dalgoda* is going to go any way toward justifying your criticisms of comics elsewhere. It seems to me to be something DC or Marvel could do right now with no change in policy. It is Fantagraphics Books' good fortune that they (you) got Jan and Dennis first, that's all. It *is* damn good, though.

Dale Coe
Cheshire, England

Dalgoda's Human Feel

Dalgoda #1 was a pretty impressive (and relatively expensive—I *had* to say that) package, but just what did we really get? Basically, it was an introduction to the world of Dalgoda, and a fine introduction it was too. After finishing the story and contemplating it a bit, I realized that quite a bit of background information had been conveyed but it had been done in a manner that was not at all labored or tedious.

The link between the Canidans and the Terrans makes a lot of sense: wary, mutually beneficial at times, self-interested. (After all, if we can't trust other countries, why should we be able to deal well with aliens, or vice versa?) Even the current situation, the "gift" of subspace travel and the alliance to fight the Nimp, is borne of self-interest. But I guess a situation of alliances for mutual self-benefit and otherwise of wary neutrality would be a substantial improvement over the current world setup.

I thought the rationale behind the 1960s look of the story was a shrewd one. It makes the art chores easier and the atmosphere easier for the reader to identify with as well as being part of the interesting and possible political situation on the future Earth.

Fujitake's art is accomplished throughout; particularly praiseworthy is the human feel he gives to Dalgoda.

I agree with Jan that "there are more kinds of drama than one guy punching another in the face." Though it was not overdone in this issue, I hope the lack of punching will not be compensated for by frequently seeing one guy blow another guy's face off.

T.M. Maple
Weston, Ont., Canada

Natural and Realistic

Dear Jan and Dennis,

I have to tell you, the first issue of *Dalgoda* was simply marvelous . . . perhaps even better than that! When I originally saw the book at the comics shop, I picked it up immediately. Being a fan of Jan Strnad's impressive work on the *Atom* mini-series, I figured his work here might be equally impressive . . . I wasn't wrong. The artwork of Dennis Fujitake wasn't something I was familiar with, only having heard his name in *The Comics Journal*, but after glancing through the pages a bit, I was taken in by his very natural poses, and smooth storytelling techniques. I liked the characters immensely, the dialogue was natural and more realistic than the average comic book's, and the quality paper topped off a nice first issue. I guess you have me hooked if you keep up all the above things. With the addition in #2 of Kevin Nowlan, one of my favorite artists, I'll definitely be back. I hope Kevin decides to do more work on mainstream super-heroes too. His art is unique, and he's easily one of the better new artists in the business today. Hey, Dennis is pretty darn good, too. So, until next time, you have a winner on your hands here, but to really make the book perfect, is there any chance for any posters, or selling of original *Dalgoda* art? That's what I liked about Capital Comics and some of the other independents—more fan involvement and concern. Anyhow, until next time, aloha!

Mark Waldman
Northridge, CA

Yes, Mark, original Dal *art pages by Dennis and "Grimwood" pages by Kevin are for sale through Fantagraphics Books. Pages are priced individually. Please send a list of pages you're interested in (list alternates if possible) and we'll send the prices.* *—GG*

GRIMWOOD'S DAUGHTERS

BY JAN S. STRNAD & KEVIN NOWLAN